

Story #556 (1974 Tape #12)

Narrator: Esat Söylü small business-
man

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Province of Yozgat

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A Kurd in and out of Heaven

In the past, Kurds used to wander about like nomads, often camping by streams. Their livestock consisted of Camels and sheep. Once when a Kurdish tribe was getting ready to move and had all its belongings loaded on camels, Haso,¹ a member of the tribe, suddenly died. Inasmuch as everything had been loaded, what were they to do with the body? When a peasant walked by, a Kurd said to him, "Are you a hoca?"²

"Yes, I am a hoca," the man said.

"Well, our Haso has just died. You ^{abstain} wash him and bury him here. We are moving downstream to set up camp there. After burying Haso here, you come to us and we shall give you cheese, butter, and everything."

"All right. I shall do what is necessary."

After the tribe had moved, the peasant put a rope around Haso's leg and dragged him to the side of the river. When he pulled off Haso's trousers, he saw that he had defecated and dirtied his underwear. "You God-damned Kurd!" he said, and he just pushed him into the river. After spending some time there, the peasant mounted his donkey and rode downstream to the Kurdish camp.

"Selâmünaleyküm," he said.

"Oh, come along, Hoca Efendi," a Kurd said. After he had sat down,

¹ Haso is the Kurdish dialect form of Hasan, just as Memo and Fato are the Kurdish dialect forms of Mehmet and Fatma.

² A hoca is a Moslem priest in Turkey.

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they asked him, "What did you do with Haso?"

Haso was very lucky," the peasant said.

"What happened?" they asked.

"Well, when I was about to wash him, four angels descended from heaven. Two lifted him by the legs, and two lifted him by the arms. When I said, 'Stop, where are you taking him?' they said, 'Fuck off! Allah wants him,' and they took him up." *Abusive language*

Another Kurd, listening to this, expressed his amazement by saying, "Bless his faith! He had stolen so many sheep in his lifetime."

A third Kurd said, "Get Hoca's wool, cheese, and bread ready."

"hoca" did not want to stay there very long, for the river would soon wash Haso's body ashore. At the very moment that he was ready to leave, a Kurdish woman said, "Hoca Efendi, you said that Haso had been taken up to heaven?"

"Yes, that is true. I saw it happen."

"But Haso is lying here on the river bank."

"hoca" turned to the other Kurds and said, "Did you not say that Haso had stolen many sheep? Probably when Allah discovered this, he just dropped him back down again!"